

**Your
Views
Matter**

Feedback

Telford and Wrekin Community Panel

January 2015... Wishing you a happy and healthy year ahead

Hello Community Panel member and welcome to your January 2015 edition of **Feedback** – the Council's newsletter for Community Panel members.

Thank you for your continued help and support.



Message from Cllr Shaun Davies

**Cabinet Member for
Neighbourhood Services,
Employment and Skills**

Together we care about the future is the sentence that we have chosen this year to introduce our budget consultation. Being an active member of the Community Panel proves that you care about the future of the borough. Thank you for your continued help and support.

I am particularly pleased that in 2014 a number of you were involved in giving your views to feed into the

Pride in your community programme. As part of the programme there have been a number of projects and improvements across the borough. We need to continue working in partnership with local residents to improve the areas that they live in. Our links with the Community Panel are really important to this work.

The Council is now making plans for the next five years and it needs your help again. I am looking forward to hearing your views and your answers to this year's budget questions. 2015 will be another difficult year but by working together we can deliver the best that we can for Telford and Wrekin.

To you and your family, I wish you a Happy New Year from me, the Leader and the Cabinet.

Update on the Panel

At the moment there are 1,178 members of the Community Panel.

Current Panel Statistics

At the moment there are 1,178 members of the Community Panel, 49% male and 51% female. In 2015 we hope, once again to encourage more residents to join the Panel and have their say in Telford and Wrekin.

Could you help us by encouraging any interested people that you know to visit www.telford.gov.uk/yourviewsmatter and complete the online application form? Alternatively ring the Community Participation team and we will post application forms to you.

In 2015 we hope, once again to encourage more residents to join the Panel and have their say in Telford and Wrekin.

Community Panel membership form

It is really important to the Council that the make up of the Community Panel reflects the make up of the local population of Telford and Wrekin. In 2014 the Council made some changes to the Community Panel membership form in order to monitor this more closely.

New questions about individuals have been added to help us to ask the right questions to the right people. For example we are now asking people if they are parents/ carers of children or young people. Sometimes the Council would like to speak directly to parents and being able to identify specific Community Panel members who 'fit the bill' would be really helpful.

This year we will be asking existing Community Panel members to help us by updating their details on the new membership forms.

Community Panel Survey January 2014

The Council's Budget

Every January as part of the Council's Borough wide budget consultation, a specific budget survey is sent to the Community Panel.

In January 2014 questions focussed on council tax and council investments.

54.2% of Panel members who sent back surveys supported the Council's plans to freeze council tax until 2016.

91.1% agreed with plans to support businesses to create jobs in the borough. 92.1% supported plans to invest in helping young people to get a job and 91.9% supported Council plans to invest in roads and the environment through the Pride in Your Community programme.

How we used your feedback

The views of Community Panel members were added to those of other local people who contributed to the budget consultation. The Council's Cabinet of Councillors used local people's views to make their final budget decisions.

The Council's Budget 2015/16

The Community Panel survey for January 2015 includes budget questions for 2015/16. Local people's responses will again feed into budget decisions. We look forward to receiving your comments.

Carers Survey and Focus Groups

We know that large numbers of local people have caring responsibilities and Community Panel membership forms have always asked people to let us know if they care for others.

Last year the Council carried out two consultations with local carers. In the first consultation the Council wanted to know:

- Why so few carers register for information and advice with either the Council or the Carers Centre
- What can be done to encourage more carers to register for information and advice

In the second consultation the Council wanted to know:

- What carers think makes a good service for carers
- How carers can influence a service and be part of decision making

Community Panel members who had told us that they have caring responsibilities for adults took part in the consultation by completing surveys and attending focus groups.

How we used your feedback

The Carers Commissioning Officer and the Carers Centre have used the information about how to reach and recruit carers from the first consultation to increase the numbers of carers who are registered for advice and support.

The information from the second consultation regarding what makes a good carer's service has been useful in considering and designing what a future service for carers should look like.

PRIDE local area surveys

In 2013 the Council launched Pride in Your Community, a £13.6m package of environmental and infrastructure improvements aimed at improving district centres, borough towns and 'high demand' areas across the borough.

During the summer, Community Panel members living in Malinslee, Donnington and College wards were sent local Pride in Your Community surveys. Panel members were asked;

- What matters most to you about your ward?
- What are the main social and environmental issues and problems for people living locally?
- What needs to change in your ward?
- Describe your ward in a sentence
- What is your ward's best selling point?

It is really important for the Council to understand what residents think about their local areas. Community Panel members were asked to help by asking 3-5 people that they knew well to complete a survey and send it back to us.

Community Panel members who live in Woodside were also sent a survey in the summer. The survey, for all Woodside residents asked local people what they felt were the main environmental problems and 'hotspots' in Woodside. The Council wanted to know local people's views on littering, fly tipping, tree and shrub management.

How we used your feedback

The information from all of the completed surveys was added to a data base and sent to the Pride lead officers for each area. These officers are using the information to draw up Pride in Your Community work plans.

Any social issues and problems mentioned on the surveys were given to the local Community Regeneration officers. These officers will be working with local people to develop projects and activities to address the issues that have been highlighted.

Local area working groups

In 2014, Community Panel members living in Cuckoo Oak, Woodside, Brookside, College, Donnington and Malinslee wards were invited to part of local area working groups. These groups bring together

local people and local councillors as well as Council officers and workers from a range of different organisations. The new groups aim to look at key local social problems and challenges and to recognise and celebrate what is good in communities across the borough.

New people are invited to these groups as they develop. If you live in any of the areas mentioned above and would like to help please email getinvolved@telford.gov.uk or call and speak to a Community Regeneration Officer on **01952 382131**.

How we will use your feedback

Each local area working group has prioritised the social issues and challenges that were highlighted in the first few meetings. People have chosen the issues that they would like to work on and action plans, projects and activities have started to be developed that will make a difference and tackle local problems.

Mystery Customer update

The Community Participation Team began training Community Panel and Young People's Forum members to act as Mystery Customers for and at the Council in July 2012. Since then almost 40 local people, ranging in age from 15-80+ years have been given the knowledge, skills and confidence to carry out the Mystery Customer programme.

Throughout November and December 2014, a new team of Mystery Customers went back to some of the services that were initially visited in the summer of 2013. Their aim was to see if improvements had been made to the way in which local people's enquiries and questions were dealt with by the Council.

The Mystery Customers have described the experience as eye opening, fun, exciting, varied, informative and well organised.

Would you like to be a Mystery Customer for the Council?

We will be looking for new Mystery Customers to make contact with the Council in 2015. Please let us know if you would like to take part, it's a great way to learn about the Council and give valuable feedback to improve services for local people.

In 2014 Mystery Customers said.....

"A unique experience where you can learn about Council services, very informative and enjoyable."

"The whole experience was really straight forward "

"It definitely changed my view of the Council. You always hear negative things on social websites and in the press so I was pleasantly surprised at what I found."

"I'm glad that I took part, I hope that my feedback will improve the customer service which needs improvement."

Remember...

As a Community Panel member you can take part in a range of activities and give your views in a number of different ways.

Responding to surveys is great and gives valuable information to the Council but after reading this newsletter you might like to further your involvement by joining in with focus groups or being a Mystery Customer.

If you decide you would like to be more involved please let us know; we would love to work with you more closely.

To find out more about Community Engagement in Telford and Wrekin visit www.telford.gov.uk/yourviewsmatter

or to get in touch with

The Community Participation team;

**Andy Challenor, Debbie Rudd
and Sarah Stembridge**

Ring 01952 382131

Email: yourviewsmatter@telford.gov.uk